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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03
INR-10 NSAE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01
OMB-01 SS-15 STR-07 CEA-01 PA-01 L-03 DODE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 TRSY-02 /083 W
----------052888 252036Z /23
O R 251936Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TM RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9115
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN 142
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY QUITO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ECIN, CO
SUBJECT: ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND COLLABORATION: THE AMAZON PACT

REF: STATE 180478

1. IN SHORT RUN, THERE APPEARS TO BE LITTLE ECONOMIC SIGNIFI-
CANCE TO COLOMBIA OF AMAZON PACT. NO HIGHWAYS CROSS COLOMBIAN-
BRAZILIAN OR COLOMBIAN PERUVIAN FRONTIER AND RIVER TRANSPORTATION
IS UNDERDEVELOPED. ALL OF COLOMBIAN AMAZONIA IS SPARESLY
POPULATED AND ALMOST COMPLETELY UNDER-EXPLOITED.

2. MOST GOC OFFICIALS BELIEVE ECONOMIC BENEFITS WOULD BE
LONG-TERM ONES. OF POSSIBLE SHORT-TERM SIGNIFICANCE WOULD BE
INCREASED COLOMBIAN UTILIZATION OF THE MANAUS FREE-PORT FOR
WAREHOUSING AND POSSIBLE ASSEMBLY USES. COLOMBIAN GOODS
COULD BE FLOWN TO LETICIA, COLOMBIA, AND EASIER CUSTOM AND
SHIPPING REGULATIONS COULD FACILITATE RIVER TRANSPORT TO
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MANAUS. PLANNING DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS NOTE THERE ARE
SEVERAL AGRICULTURAL, MINIG AND HYDROELECTRIC PROJECTS
WHICH COLOMBIA COULD UNILATERALLY BEGIN WHICH MIGHT AFFECT
THE BASIN'S ECOLOGY AND THUS WOULD NEED INTER-AMAZONIAN
CONSULATATION. SEVERAL OF ABOVE PROJECTS COULD ALSO BE OF
A JOINT BINATIONAL NATURE. PROJECTS WOULD BEAN LONG-TERM
DEVELOPMENT OF AT LEAST PARTS OF BASIN ACCORDING TO GOC

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3. IN A RECENT STATEMENT TO THE PRESS, JORGE MARIO EASTMEN, NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES, DECLARED THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PACT LIES IN THE PROTECTION IT AFFORDS TO THE INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRIES IN THE AMAZON BASIN. UNTIL THE SIGNATURE OF THE TREATY, IT HAD BEEN FEARED THAT THE AMAZON BASIN WOULD BE EXPLOITED BY COUNTRIES OUTSIDE THE AREA. IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION, HE REJECTED THE IDEA THAT THE PACT CONSITUTED AN INSTRUMENT OF REGIONAL HEGEMONY, ADDING THAT THE TEXT ITSELF RULED OUT THE POSSIBLITY THAT ANY SIGNATORY WOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE UNFAIR ADVANTAGE OF THE OTHERS.

4. EMBASSY ANTICIPATES NO INHERENT DIFFICULTY IN RATIFICATION OF PACT BY COLOMBIA. HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF FACT THAT NEW GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE OVER ON AUGUST 7, IT SEEMS LIKELY SOME TIME WILL LAPSE BEFORE RATIFICATION TAKES PLACE.

5. COMMENT: REMARKS MADE BY EASTMEN, THOUGH LACKING IN PRECISION, CLEARLY REFER TO SUCH ACTIVITIES AS LUDWIG PROJECT IN BRAZIL, ON ONE HAND, AND TO COLOMBIAN CONCERNS ABOUT BRAZILIAN AMBITIONS, ONTHE OTHER.
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